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In a year when a European bested the finest the United States had to offer there isn't a better time for American motocross to re-assert itself at the biggest race of the season - the 68th Motocross of/Des Nations - in Latvia on September 28th. Team USA last hoisted the Chamberlain trophy in 2012 so (from left to right) Ryan Dungey, Jeremy Martin and Eli Tomac have been entrusted with winning it back for the 23rd time. The build-up is well underway

Photo by Simon Cudby





The drop...

Copse is the hiding place for Martin Heath as the fastest competitive motorcycles in the world bear down on the first corner of the British Grand Prix (that you might have noticed was sponsored by Hertz) at Silverstone. At the unlikeliest of tracks the series enjoyed some of the best racing scenes this year

Photo by Martin Heath www.martinheath.com



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Still on for the three?

Jeffrey Herlings in his prime and before the bouts of anguish against a ticking clock. The Dutchman has almost run out of time to make a comeback from a broken leg for this weekend's State of Goas Grand Prix – the penultimate round of seventeen – and must be hoping his peers in MX2 can do their best to prevent Red Bull KTM team-mate Jordi Tixier going 1-1 in the motos and creating a tense finale next week in Mexico. Herlings is likely to ride there one-legged to snare enough points to capture his third crown on the bounce. Some dramatic days ahead

Photo by Ray Archer







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YOU HAVE TO WONDER HOW LONG MARC MARQUEZ SEETHED OVER HIS FOURTH PLACE AT BRNO. IT CERTAINLY DIDN'T LOOK LIKE HE WAS GOING TO ACCEPT ANYTHING LESS THAN AN ELEVENTH WIN FROM TWELVE AGAINST A RAMPANT JORGE LORENZO AT SILVERSTONE. THEIR DUEL HARKED BACK TO THE HEYDAYS OF THE BRITISH GRAND PRIX AT THE ENGLISH CIRCUIT IN THE '70S (THEN QUITE A DIFFERENT LAYOUT) IRONICALLY AT WHAT COULD BE THE LAST VISIT BY MOTOGP TO NORTHAMPTONSHIRE. IT WAS THE BEST RACE OF THE SEASON SO FAR...

By Adam Wheeler, Photos by Martin Heath www.martinheathphoto.com

R



PLAY

The notorious English climate decided to be kind to Silverstone for a MotoGP swansong and the weekend delivered three riveting races just to remind people that, in spite of the some of the criticisms of taking the series to the home of F1 in the UK, the 71 year old venue can actually do a pretty good job.

The bumpy asphalt caused a few headaches throughout Friday and the usual period of acclimatisation, particularly after the welcoming and wide sweeps of Brno two weeks before. Apparently over 67,000 people travelled to Silverstone for the last instalment of the British Grand Prix before the event enters a period of limbo. The controversial Circuit of Wales has the rights from 2015 but doesn't yet have a facility, which means the race will make a temporary landing somewhere next summer. It all seems a bit hazy and undignified for one of the FIM World Championship's original fixtures back in 1949.

Silverstone is Jorge Lorenzo's stomping ground. The Majorcan has planted a 'Lorenzo's Land' flag there literally/figuratively three times in the five years that MotoGP has entered the circuit. The Yamaha rider maintained his 2014 trek back to form and speed with rapier speed in the opening stages. Lorenzo ran amok across the former RAF bomber airfield and seemed intent to wreck his own devastation, as Marquez looked a little ragged keeping up. Afterwards Lorenzo commented that he was "pushing a lot and maybe he [Marquez] was able to relax a little bit more. I was struggling a lot with my physical condition to keep the bike on two wheels and being able to ride these lap times."

Marquez attacked in the final third of the distance but then slipped up twice and Lorenzo dived back past at Abbey curve. They touched entering the first gear Arena and Marquez broke the link with two laps to go. The champion's dive through the tight chicane, skipping the curve to seize the inside position, was aggressive but inviting. The Catalan said he "had a score to settle from last year, when Jorge beat me on the final corner," but also praised the forward step both his countryman and Yamaha team-mate Valentino Rossi had made in terms of pace.



Marquez gets hopping. Paint would be traded with Lorenzo on-route to Honda's twelfth GP win of the year to continue their 2014 shut-out. Lorenzo earned his 80th career podium and needs nine more trophies to usurp Giacomo Agostini



MotoGP GBR



The gap between the protagonists at the finish line was just over half a second...and no baulking back-markers in sight.

The crowd had ample distraction behind the warring Spaniards. Rossi, a fiery Andrea Dovizioso and Marquez de-throner Dani Pedrosa were barely separated from the fifth lap. Pedrosa simply described the GP as "not the best weekend" but Rossi clearly relished the battle with the Ducati and posted his eighth podium result of the year on what was a personal record landmark for '46' in terms of MotoGP starts.

Highlights were enjoyed in Moto2 with the Marc VDS duo of Esteve Rabat and Mika Kallio again disputing honours and were separated by six hundredths of a second at the line in favour of the Spaniard. Maverick Viñales was only two tenths away in third. A similar close climax in Moto3 meant that the last Woodcote corner was the place to be on Sunday. Alex Rins earning the spoils by a breath from Honda team-mate Alex Marquez (already signed for Marc VDS for 2015). The younger sibling of MotoGP's power family is Jack Miller's closest challenger in the title chase – the pair split by 13 points – as the Red Bull KTM riding Australian could only cross the line in sixth.

For British fans it was Scott Redding – famously creating memorably scenes at the same site twelve months previously in Moto2 – who was again the lead runner as speculation continues over where (and which) Honda he will ride in 2015. The Gresini man scored tenth place while Bradley Smith had to pit with a damaged rear wheel and Cal Crutchlow struggled with grip and confidence to fifteenth. The outgoing works Ducati rider simply said he was "pleased to finish the race" after classifying twelfth. Sam Lowes was underwhelmed by seventh place in Moto2 and Danny Kent was hoping for better than a top ten on the Red Bull Husqvarna in Moto3.

Marquez, now with 17 wins from 30 MotoGP appearances, has a gap of 89 points over Pedrosa with six races and 150 remaining.





It doesn't get much closer and the Rossi-Pedrosa-Dovizioso tussle would end with a very first podium finish for Rossi at Silverstone on a day where he became the rider with the most Grands Prix appearances in the premier class of the sport



bwin



Rins still cannot believe he has the chequered flag after a momentous last corner barrage

Emotional stuff for Rabat who, with his sixth win of the season, made Kalex the most successful manufacturer in the Moto2 class with 31 victories

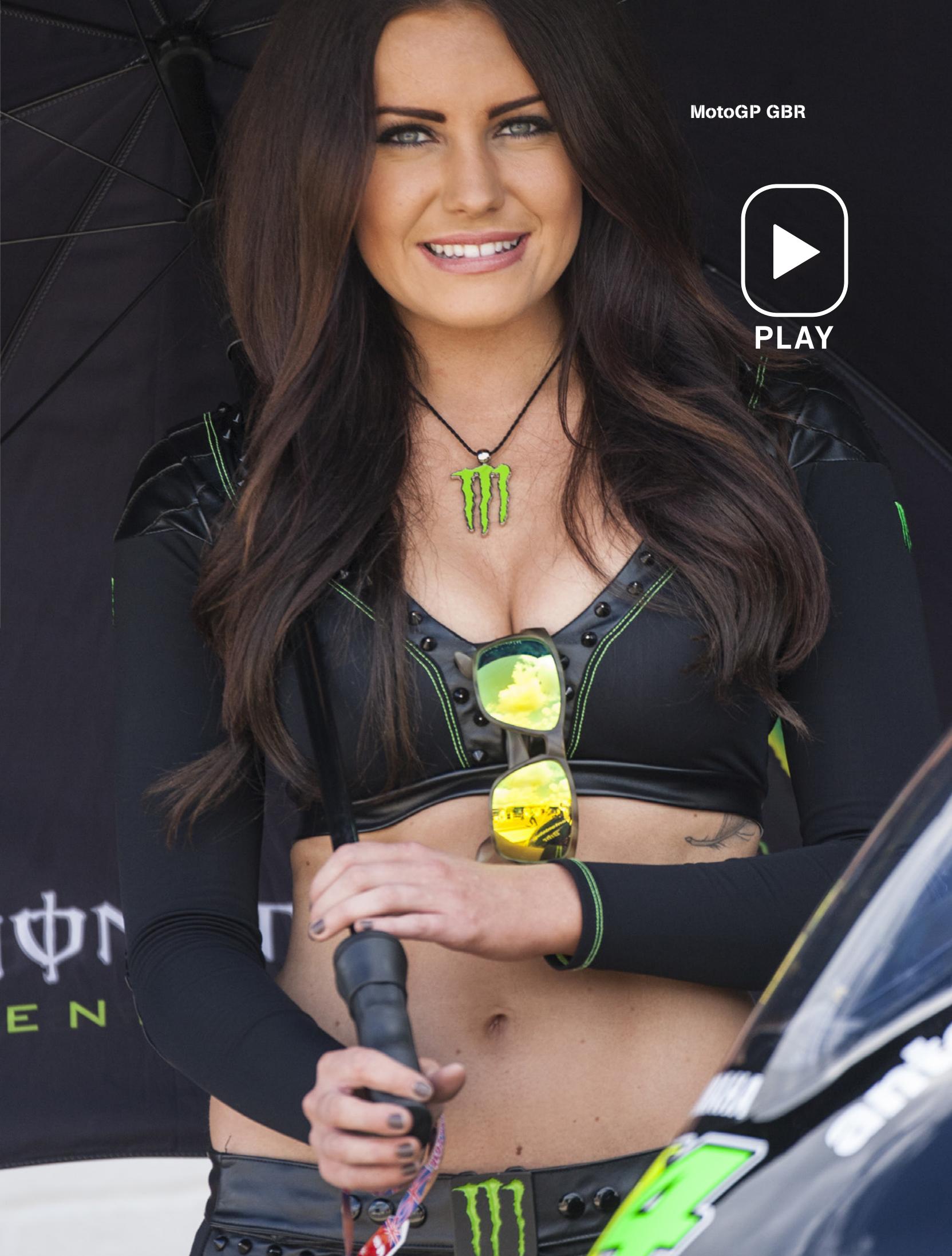


The face says it all for Crutchlow while Bradley Smith coasts on the stricken Tech3 Yamaha. Scott Redding flies by

MotoGP GBR



PLAY



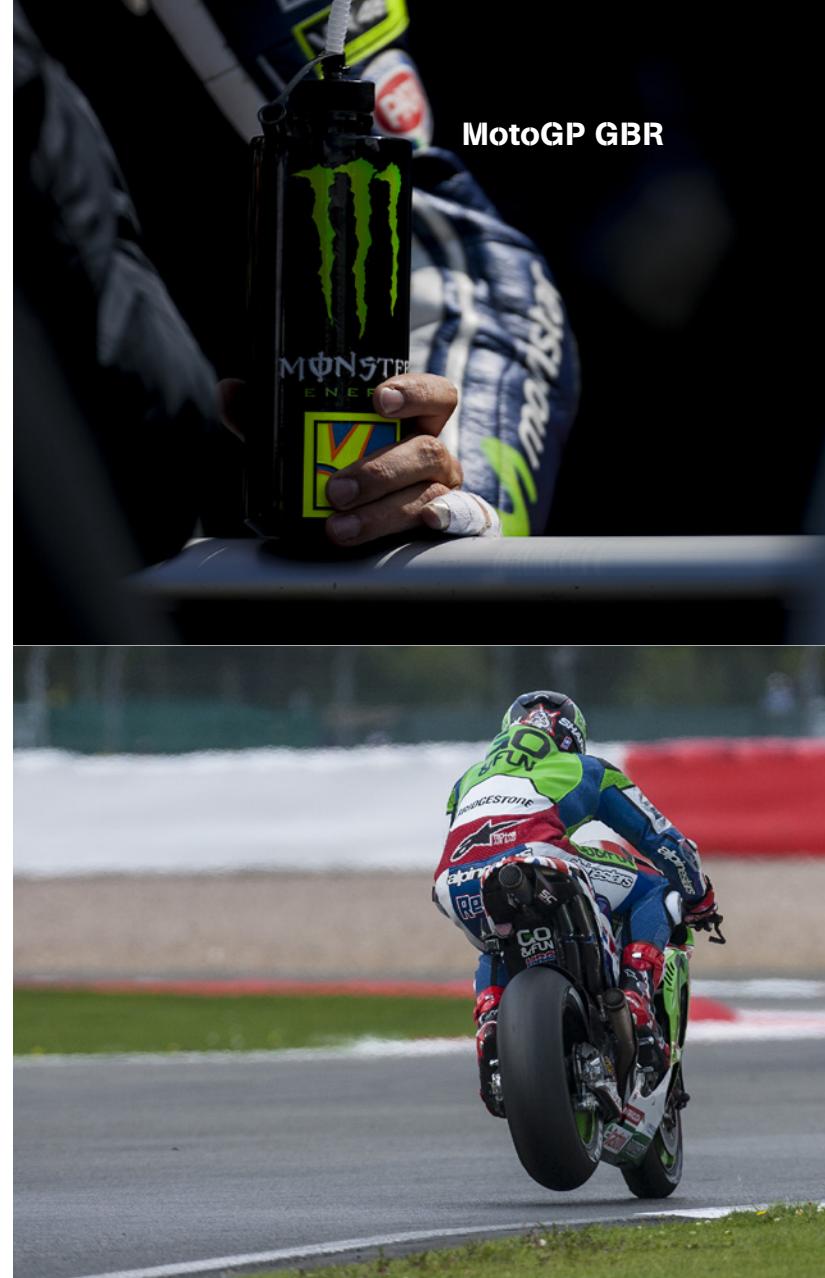


MotoGP GBR

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MotoGP GBR

CLASSIFICATION & CHAMPIONSHIP

MotoGP RESULT

Riders

1	Marc Marquez, SPA	Honda
2	Jorge Lorenzo, SPA	Yamaha
3	Valentino Rossi, ITA	Yamaha
4	Dani Pedrosa, SPA	Honda
5	Andrea Dovizioso, ITA	Ducati

MotoGP CHAMPIONSHIP AFTER 12 of 18 ROUNDS

Riders	Points
1 Marc Marquez	288
2 Dani Pedrosa	199
3 Valentino Rossi	189
4 Jorge Lorenzo	157
5 Andrea Dovizioso	129

Moto2 RESULT

Riders

1	Esteve Rabat, SPA	Kalex
2	Mika Kallio, FIN	Kalex
3	Maverick Viñales, SPA	Kalex
4	Johann Zarco, FRA	Cat. Suter
5	Thomas Luthi, SUI	Suter

Moto2 CHAMPIONSHIP AFTER 12 of 18 ROUNDS

Riders	Points
1 Esteve Rabat	233
2 Mika Kallio	216
3 Maverick Viñales	166
4 Dominique Aegerter	123
5 Simone Corsi	100

Moto3 RESULT

Riders

1	Alex Rins, SPA	Honda
2	Alex Marquez, SPA	Honda
3	Enea Bastianini, ITA	KTM
4	Miguel Oliveira, POR	Mahindra
5	Jakub Kornfiel, CZE	KTM

MotoGP CHAMPIONSHIP AFTER 12 of 18 ROUNDS

Riders	Points
1 Jack Miller	179
2 Alex Marquez	166
3 Alex Rins	150
4 Efren Vazquez	145
5 Romano Fenati	135



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MotoGP

BLOG

MAPPING IT OUT...

By Matthew Roberts

The 1st September is the day that the British sports media goes well and truly crazy. It is the English Premier League's 'Transfer Deadline Day' and there was wall to wall coverage of the frantic comings and goings right up until the moment the window 'slammed shut' at 11pm, by which time £835,000,000 had been spent since it 'opened' on 1st July.

The 'Transfer Window' is a bizarre spectacle unmatched in any other sport but MotoGP does have its own 'Silly Season'. Unlike soccer there is no set deadline for contracts to be signed but, after the most recent dealings and announcements at Silverstone over the weekend, time is clearly running out for those wishing to bag a top deal for 2015.

Right now Honda are the Manchester City of MotoGP, discarding some unfulfilled potential and tying up the long-term futures of their established stars. Unsurprisingly Marc Marquez was handed a new two-year contract back in May, whilst Dani Pedrosa remains the next-best-option for the Repsol-backed team and he was recently rewarded with a new two-year deal of his own. In the meantime HRC are cleverly using their satellite teams to groom future talent, with Scott Redding having been promised a factory RC213V next year regardless of Team Gresini's financial problems and Jack Miller waiting in the wings to see where he might fit in to the equation.

Yamaha are more like Arsenal, sticking with their established talent and dragging their heels in the search for new blood. Watching Jorge Lorenzo wring the neck of the M1 – at a circuit that in theory suited the bike – only to finish second (again) to Marquez at Silverstone on Sunday made me wonder what their next step might be. Pol Espargaro has not set the world alight in his debut season, Bradley Smith has struggled to consistently convince and with Lorenzo and Valentino

Rossi occupying both factory seats for the next two seasons, their long term strategy seems vague. There was reportedly an approach to Moto3 title contender Alex Rins, but he has opted to progress through Moto2 rather than follow the direct route preferred by Miller.

At least Yamaha have identified that the only real long-term antidote to Marquez, unless they can give Lorenzo a significantly improved package, is to snare a rider at an earlier stage of his development. A youngster like Rins has the potential not only to learn the new best practice currently being established by the World Champion but to take it a step further in the future. Sooner or later a genuine rival to Marquez will emerge but the fear for Yamaha fans is that they have already missed out on his signature. Aside from Rins, Redding, Miller and probably Maverick Viñales the men with arguably the most potential are Tito Rabat and Alex Marquez, who will both be in Moto2 next year with Marc VDS, a team currently in advanced talks with Honda to set up a MotoGP team for Redding.

If Marc VDS do establish a relationship with HRC they would have the ideal blueprint to bring riders through the categories and integrate young talent into the Honda 'family,' as Redding referred to it at the weekend. It is a set-up Yamaha tentatively tried with Tech 3 a couple of years ago but they struggled with an uncompetitive Mistral chassis and it did nothing to aid the development of Smith, who came into MotoGP without a win to show for his efforts in the intermediate class. Personally I'd like to see them go down that route again, only this time ensuring a competitive package for a young rider like Miller, Rins or Viñales. Offering one of these guys a pathway to their factory team is the only sure way to mount a challenge to Honda's impending long-term dominance and to avoid getting their fingers trapped in the 'transfer window' in the future.





CARBON
construction

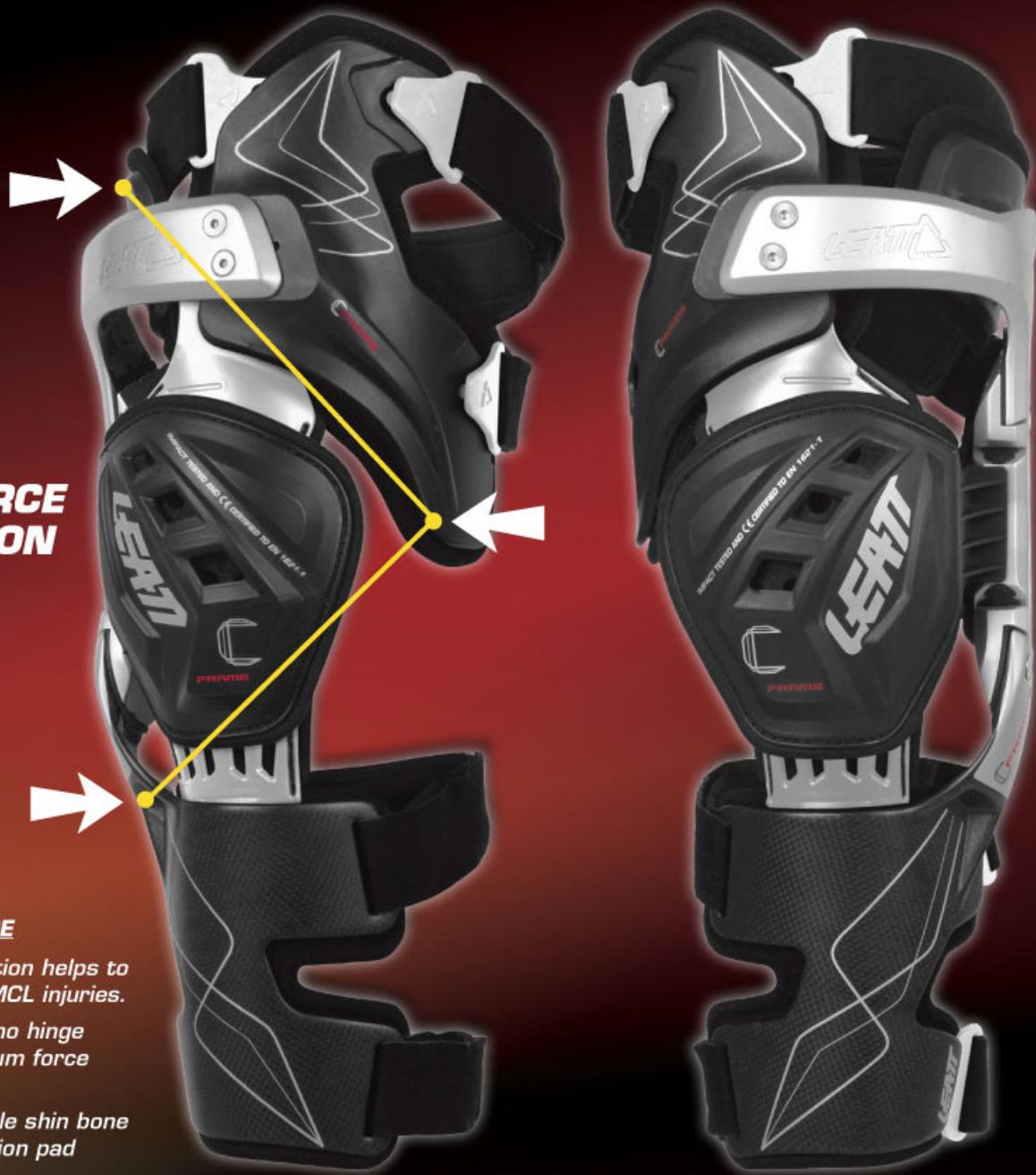
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FEATURE





ALPINESTARS IN MotoGP

MAN IN MotoGP

By Adam Wheeler, Photos by JP Acevedo/Alpinestars

Chris Hillard has helped pull the strings on the ground for the pioneering technical giants in their Grand Prix ascension over the past decade. We decided to get a bit more 'behind the scenes' with one of the sport's prominent players thanks to Chris' story...



You cannot miss Alpinestars in MotoGP.

Ever since Kenny Roberts flashed the 'Astars' logo on his boots in the '70s and through to when Carlos Checa debuted their leathers in the 1990s, the Italian-American company have been a prevalent part of the paddock. As technical partners and suppliers to the championship and some of the top riders in the game (Marquez, Pedrosa, Lorenzo, Viñales, Redding, Miller) it has been hard to miss Alpinestars; especially through the evolution of some of their products on the track (with protective materials and concepts like the Tech Air bag) that have filtered into goods on the dealer shelves.

While President and owner Gabriele Mazzarolo remains very closely involved with racing and Alpinestars' athletes and is a frequent visitor to MotoGP overseeing one of the most pleasant hospitality set-ups this side of the pit wall it is usually the welcoming hand of Chris Hillard that most people know and recognise when it comes to Astars in the sport. One of the ever-present 'hardcore' at every round we could think of nobody better to lift the lid a little more on what it is like to work closely with MotoGP heroes outside of the actual race teams (the Brit was - and still is - a close friend to Casey Stoner). Chris also talks about Alpinestars' dedicated presence in Grand Prix...

2005 were my first races and I have been with Alpinestars for ten years now. I was following Superbike, some moto-

cross and supermoto. From 2006 I've been to every MotoGP race. It is one of those stories of somebody taking a chance on an unknown kid really. I checked the [Alpinestars] website and scrolled through a load of jobs I couldn't do and found this one at the bottom that I thought could be interesting. I applied, got the job and two weeks later I was living in Italy.

In terms of the actual work there has been a progression through the years and it seemed like there was a new challenge every season. From walking into the paddock for the first time and being wide-eyed in the sport – it was quite daunting – to now where I have been around for a few years and have become part of the furniture and tend to know everybody. It is still intense because this sport will always be so, but I am more in control of what is around and what I'm doing. In 2006 it was servicing the riders and making sure they had everything they needed for the race weekend, gathering information and taking it back to the engineers in the office and then things like re-ordering custom or stock products for the next races. Now the role is about overall direction instead of specific day-to-day needs, and about safeguarding our position and relationships. About making sure riders make the most out of their partnership with Alpinestars and we make the most of our association with them. That means initiatives and projects like the one in Barcelona where we had the themed race boots for the riders in the lead-up to the World Cup.

I have always been quite ambitious and we have always prided ourselves on our products and service. If you want to work hard to push the envelope then Alpinestars really give you the platform to do that. For me it is a mixture of wanting to push hard and also a big fear of failure that drives me to not sit back and just be reactive. What helps us in the paddock is that we are approachable. We communicate with all teams and all riders and we are always here. I suppose I am the point of contact and if a rider or a team want to talk about a project then they'll come to talk to me.

Our job at the MotoGP Grands Prix? We have a dedicated racing development centre with over one hundred staff in Italy and a team of technicians that also come here to the track as well. We have a workshop in the back of the truck where we are not only able to do light repairs and things like changes to logos but we are able to develop products. Riders might show up with an injury and we can be adapting the product as the weekend goes on. Riders can have that confidence in us and they don't need to worry about their equipment; this is what we do and our speciality. It can be something as small as making sure the rider has enough knee sliders or something fundamental such as catering to individual requirements, for example adjusting a boot to suit a recently operated ankle with limited movement. There is a lot of communication and interaction.



My job satisfaction comes through our main aim of bringing new technology in and going through that testing period to whereby more people are using it and then it goes onto standard products. That's our process, and to be involved in the birth of an idea and see it go all the way to the high street it's nice to be part of that. Another thing for me is seeing the careers of riders we have been with a long time and that we have worked with; like Marc Marquez. Every single Grand Prix he has done has been in Alpinestars. He joined us at fifteen years old when he first came into the paddock and through to the point where he is sitting on top of the world. I take satisfaction from that because I was the one who took the call from Emilio [Alzamora, Personal Manager] who said that a 'real talent' was coming and it would be great if we could be onboard. To see how determined and passionate he was about this kid was great and we took the chance and the rest is history. We have long-standing relationships with all of our riders and I like seeing them do well.

There is a team of us who make the final call on whether to work with a rider. In general the people here see and talk about someone and then a select group of us make the decision.

As a sports fan I find it so interesting to see the process that elite athletes go through in preparing to perform at the top level. Not only in MotoGP but also motocross, superbike, downhill mountain biking, trials... all the categories that we follow. Casey was the absolute example of somebody who would go out of his way to make sure that there was zero superstition or routine to his process. He was someone who saw a superstition as a weakness, of putting things out of his control. He purposely avoided rituals...and that was hard to work with because you could never really pin him down at any particular time. That was his method and obviously it got results and championships. I always found it interesting to watch.

Is there a misconception about Casey?

Probably, yeah. I know him really well and I think he was misunderstood when he was racing. The fact is that he's probably the most honest guy you will ever meet. He wears his heart on his sleeve and tells you how he feels, for better or for worse. If you saw him in an interview and didn't like what he was saying then at least you can rest assured that he was speaking his mind and from the heart. He also had the patience and perseverance to spend time trying to teach me some skills on a bike and in a kart, no easy task and that makes him a saint in my book.

They say you should never meet your heroes or it's not possible to be friends with a personality

but it depends on the circumstances and the athlete. With Casey we met through racing and forged a good friendship because of that but it has also continued after racing.....It is a tricky one and depends on the definition of 'friendship'. I just focus on the job and providing the service that we deliver as a technical partner and you naturally build relationships through that and the repetition. I've worked with Dani Pedrosa since 2007, which I think was his first year with us, and there have been many conversations in that time. It can be difficult to break it down and explain but it is a lifestyle. It is the kind of work where you cannot really cruise-in and cruise-out. You need to be available seven days a week and need to be prepped for something that might have happened midweek in training. It is about immersion and you become the job.

Where next for Alpinestars? Innovation is an ever present challenge but we are always studying new materials and new technologies to improve performance and we are looking at how we can incorporate them into our products. It could be fabric based or an adjustment to the airbag system that covers the whole body. With reference to that last product this 2014 version is already an improvement over that of 2013. We will see where development takes it. For us it is about working with the riders to find the best compromise between performance, comfort and safety.





NO SHO W NO CARS

—
Some see life as a challenging track
toward success, glory and podiums.
Some just see a track.

A close-up photograph of a man's face, focusing on his eyes and the goggles he is wearing. He is wearing a yellow Scott motocross helmet with the brand name 'SCOTT' and a 'S' logo on the forehead. The goggles are yellow and black, with water droplets on the lenses. He is looking down and to the side. The background is blurred.

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FEATURE

JUST A FAIR RUN...

By Adam Wheeler, Photos by Ray Archer

Evgeny Bobryshev doesn't ask for too much. He doesn't talk about titles, domination or adoration. The friendly and accessible Russian just wants a fair and injury-free crack at MXGP, something that has eluded the 26 year old since 2011. Hobbling around the Lommel circuit and not yet quite fully recovered from the horrific triple leg-break sustained at the Italian Grand Prix in June, 'Bobby' was only too happy to chat about the never-ending curve of frustration that he has ridden since that maiden victory in '11 at Teutschenthal in Germany...

BOBBY



Talking with Bobryshev is always fun. His dialogue is honest and amusing and he has this strange habit of lifting, re-arranging and dropping his cap during an interview; a curious twitch. Profanities also pop up during his discourse; an endearing remnant of his season with the defunct British CAS Honda team back in 2010. Photographer Ray Archer suggests some portraits with his Ford Shelby the next day (which is actually at a Valkenswaard dealership waiting to be sold) and another meet is easily set.

If we turn the honesty spotlight back on the Russian then his career in Grand Prix so far is in danger of becoming a big 'missed opportunity'. A Honda-supported rider since 2011 and that breakthrough term where his determination and aggression were key traits, Bobby has endured a series of niggly injuries that – in spite of a few podiums here and there – have prevented him from joining both Gautier Paulin (his new HRC team-mate allegedly) and Clement Desalle as Tony Cairoli's direct threats for MXGP glory. It seems like Bobby has hit the reset button several times and although injury is part-of-the-parcel the rate with which he suffers bad luck is quite astonishing.

With HRC's high profile re-entry to the premier class in Grand Prix this year 2014 was the year for Evgeny to deliver but a re-break with his 2013 leg ailment and then the accident when his other limb was smashed by Desalle at Maggiora meant his status as works racer was in danger. Honda staff however offered a new deal for 2015 because they too can recognise that his potential has yet to bubble through.

So, another interview while you're injured.

What on earth...?

I don't know man. Some shit has been happening already for a few years and I really don't know how to explain it.

You've been a works Honda rider since 2011 but HRC stepped it up this year. Was there increased pressure to perform?

There is pressure but I don't feel it that much because I know that [beforehand] I do everything that I have to do [to get the job done]. I was always 'coming back'. To get fit in one day is impossible so I have had to go step by step. I cracked my fibula again at the beginning of the season and it was a strange incident. I was just riding that day and getting going with the bike – not doing anything stupid – and I put my leg out in a turn and it just 'went'. I was amazed how it could have happened to be honest. The doctor said it hadn't healed enough but it had already been six months! I had an operation for another plate and they made it stronger. I was guarding my leg in the races and the corner on which I crashed at Arco di Trento I noticed everybody was sitting through that part but I couldn't and went down. Then Jeremy [Van Horebeek] landed on top of me. After that then I had the back problem as well because it had been hit so hard that it stopped me training. It was a crazy time. I had to restart again and eventually my training was going good and the speed and the 'old Bobby' was coming back. Then fucking Desalle broke my leg in three places [at Maggiora]. It was just hanging down when I took my boot off. You cannot imagine how I was feeling those days afterwards. It was an important time because I had no contract for next year and the team were looking around. I felt like I hadn't shown my potential. A deal was secondary then. I was frustrated and disappointed to break my leg again. At least it wasn't my fault but this just make you even more frustrated and I dropped my head.

BOBBY



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FEATURE

BOBBY



Was that your worst injury? More serious than the chest and head problems in Brazil four seasons ago?

I had so much pain in the leg. The accident in Brazil [2010, final round] collapsed my lung and that's pretty important for every day! The leg is just a bone...but I have seen now what happens when that bone snaps completely. In Italy it was just hanging by muscles and skin. I knew right away that someone had broken it. When I dropped the bike I knew I had to get the boot off and as soon as I did it blew up like a balloon. The pain was unreal and I could hear the bones cracking and moving...if I think about it now I want to be sick.

How did you cope with an injury like that?

I'm not sure what I did. I think it was just the process that had to be done: recovery, training and fitness. I took some comfort in the training that I knew is necessary to be an athlete at the top level and being a professional. I just could not give all that up.

Did you question the 'wisdom' of your profession in those difficult moments afterwards?

No. Time is a healer. I knew the first two weeks would be the hardest with the pain but I also knew that in a few months that I would be fine. I have a goal; it is always in my head so I am always trying to reach it. I want to realise my potential and when I am fit I know what I can do and I know what I deserve from my work. I haven't got there yet because of what has happened.

You seem happiest when you are fit, on the bike and getting near that potential but in the last two seasons it just seems like it hasn't happened much...

Yes, after 2011-12 there has always been 'something' and it is frustrating for the team as well because we work together and we want the results. I have been on the podium when I feel good and I have been taking the experience I've gained over the last few seasons and putting it into my riding but whenever I get to the point where we are reaching something good then something happens! You end up thinking 'what's wrong?' and 'why does this keep hap-

pening to me?' and that's when you think 'why bother?' but you know the answer – like I said.

Can you achieve anything in MXGP if you are not 100% each race?

At this level it is difficult even if you are 95%. To win you need to be physically and mentally good and not have any fears or nerves. You have to feel like you can destroy everyone. When you are coming back from injury then you have the most question marks and you are unsure of a few things: your speed, how you will go, how they will go. That's why you need to train, prep and take confidence as fast as you can. But you cannot count for something like Maggiora. You never know what can happen. I never think 'shit, I could crash and really hurt myself' unless I feel that I am pushing well over the limit. When I go to the gate or a GP after injury then I'm not thinking 'I should go a second slower, take less risks and finish fifteenth'. I guess it is not my way. I just want to give my best.

How did you feel when Roger Harvey [HRC Team Co-ordinator] called offering the deal for another year?

To be honest it made my fucking day. I had been lying on my ass on the sofa for ten days because I could not move with the leg or through the pain. I was trying to distract myself at home and playing on the Playstation too much to not think about what had just happened. Then I had that call. A really good call. It made me want to start running with my broken leg! Before that moment I was thinking if I was in a situation where I could not get a factory ride in Europe then I would move to America. I think it would be better to ride for a private team there than in Europe to be honest. I still feel like I deserve a factory ride. It is because I know for the effort I do and the work I put in that it has to be matched by other people. I did wonder if I would get a factory ride [for 2015] because I knew people had been looking at me and thinking 'he's struggled for two years now'. I'm so thankful for the belief my team have in me. We have been together a while now and I'm so pleased they wanted to give me a chance.

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FEATURE



It must feel good to still be in in that privileged position of representing HRC...
That was one of the reasons why I was disappointed after the injury. This is HRC's first year back in MXGP and in some ways they are still learning about the category. They have experience but times have changed and they have already taken onboard so much this year that I know the whole set-up will be so good in 2015. I wanted to stay one more year because I know it will be special. I heard about working with HRC and I have experienced it now. They are so strict at the races and so focussed, but away from the track they switch off and are such nice people. It is a good environment.

You are a good character in the paddock and the sport. Is it hard to still be like this – friendly and smiling - even through the dark times?

I love this [MXGP]. I think one of the best things in the world is when you do your job and you like your job. I've had some hard times but I like the atmosphere here. Maybe another person would be sitting in the dark when they are injured but I like to visit the races and see the team and my friends because this is my life. Motocross is in my blood and I cannot keep away from it. I cannot see the reason to stop smiling. Why should I bring myself down?





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TOP OF THE (MX) WORLD...

By Adam Wheeler

When I saw Ken Roczen win the 450MX AMA Pro National Motocross Championship last week I couldn't help but reflect on the astonishing trajectory of an amazing career and talent to-date; a world, supercross and now American number one at the age of twenty. I thought back to his Grand Prix debut in 2009 at a damp Agueda in Portugal. The recently turned fifteen year old was just one of another bright lights coming through from prominent results on the European and youth scene. I was writing some promo material for the Suzuki MX2 squad then and I remember Team Manager Thomas Ramsbacher stressing that Roczen should be included in the communication and publicity documents. Before Portugal I can recall thinking the equal 'billing' Roczen was given alongside then teammates Xavier Boog and Yohei Kojima before he had even run a lap at international level was a case of overhype but his debut was quite startling. Fourth in the second moto and seventh overall was quite sensational for an adolescent. And one who had crashed on Saturday. "This is unbelievable. I never thought I would be able to get a result like this the first time," he said to me and I wrote on Sunday.

And boy, did Roczen develop fast. I recall seeing his disbelieving face when he won his home Grand Prix only four rounds later. The attention and spotlight seemed too much for someone who was barely a teenager but the pressure and clamour at Teutschenthal would become much more intense over the next four years (where he raced every season up to the crowning 2013 Motocross of Nations success). It got to the point where Roczen could be a difficult person to find once Grand Prix rolled onto German turf. Across the next two seasons it was bewildering to see the evolution of an athlete from a skinny whippet who flicked a 250 without a care to a rider with

the strength to challenge Jeffrey Herlings in the sand.

Back in 2009 RacerX and MX Sports notable Davey Coombs soon sent me an email asking what all the fuss was about. After all this was a kid who'd been comprehensively smoked by Justin Barcia at Loretas (Roczen was on the comeback trail after a leg injury – if I remember rightly – and was always disappointed that he couldn't give a better account of himself during that initial taste of racing in America). I simply wrote back that we were witnessing the whirlwind growth of something that seemed too good to be true.

I remember another anecdote from the Suzuki days when former Technical Co-Ordinator Jens Johansson summed up the rapid rate of Roczen's advancement. The Swede described how the rider would make his first laps in the devilish sand of Lommel for training and testing and would still try to whip the Suzuki like he was at his home track in Mattstedt in the centre of Germany. Lommel is an extreme example of some of the rougher and sandier tracks found in Grand Prix; hence why so many use it as a base of reference and a large group of GP regulars reside close by. After several weeks Johansson said the team had helped turn Roczen into a racer who made the jumps straight-up, like 'an old fashioned Dutch rider'. Dumbing down his style on a motorcycle at that point in 09-10 almost seemed like a crime; like vandalising a precious painting. Roczen would go on to beat Herlings at Lommel in a moto in 2011: the only person to do that in sandy terrain in a GP since 2010.

When Roczen joined KTM for 2011 – kings of the paddock and MX2 since 2008 – there was an air of inevitability.



His underdog status was removed after he departed the occasionally spluttering Suzuki through a management/sponsor issue (also some electrical problems ruined a potential win in Catalunya in 2010 among others) and although Herlings was on the scene, '94' was nearing his MX2 GP peak at the age of eighteen.

I recollect how his star power accelerated and getting interview time (any time at all) became trickier. His English was exceptional from the first days in GPs and his poster-boy looks meant that he was always a standout for brands like Red Bull and Fox. America called and the allure became even stronger after his immense performance at the 2010 Nations in Denver; the first of his four straight MX2 victories in the 'World Cup' of motocross, the great leveller.

I was shocked by the demands riders at Roczen's level faced in the USA, particularly around supercross. As a journalist it was hard not to become just another figure that Ken liked to try and dodge while juggling a schedule that left precious little time between flights, travel and racing in cities around the U.S. on a weekly basis. We enjoyed a lunch with the champion during his second full season living in California and after a photoshoot for KTM in 2013 and we spoke candidly about quite a few topics in racing. Several days later it was honestly great to catch his eye and be greeted by a massive smile on a cold evening in Oakland after he'd taken his first 250SX victory of the title-winning campaign. I last interviewed him at Anaheim 3 this year. Ken likes to talk in soundbites rather than long, thoughtful answers – I've always called him a product of the 'video generation' – so never the easiest of interviewees but he has probably wracked up more Q+As since his voice broke than I've carried out in fourteen years of motorsport reporting. From 2009 to 2011 I still liked his fresh and alternative quotes in Grand

Prix press conferences. Other riders would routinely gripe about a one-line track but Roczen spun it round, and with a wink would say "it's always possible to pass, you just need to have an eye for it."

Roczen is almost the perfect racing animal. He has fitness, finesse, technical skill, the power to analyse, hardly ever crashes, is soft on machinery and adapts so quickly to whatever new challenge awaits. His capacity for supercross progressed from fondness and capability to AMA championship prolificacy on both 250 and 450cc motorcycles: there is surely not a better indicator for his potential. When he was criticised for being unable to last motos in the intolerable American heat during the Nationals summer calendar then he sought a position as one of trainer Aldon Baker's finely tuned specimens and bridged another gap.

My only concern now for Ken is 'where next?' There is still that premier class Supercross championship to own (and the MXGP crown... with his European roots it is hard to believe that he won't return and try Grand Prix again one day) but with James Stewart in problems and Ryan Villopoto out of the picture then the job might become less complicated in 2015 – even though threats lie everywhere and the futility of writing-off veterans like Chad Reed was proved with the Australian's early glory in January/February. Like Marc Marquez, Roczen has already achieved so-much-so-soon and has crested the heights of motocross. His CV does not have the history making full house of titles and this might be his goal (just another three to go from a possible six) but there are many years ahead and for the sake of just being able to watch him ride and race I hope his motivation and unrivalled propensity for improvement doesn't fade just yet.



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MYSTERIOUS WAYS...

By Steve Matthes

With the 2014 Lucas Oil Pro Motocross Championships in our rear view mirror it's time to focus on the off-season here in America. With seemingly 64 different riders whose contracts were up this year and switching teams, we've got a lot of athletes who will be sporting new colors next year. The general 'start' date for the new hires is October 1st but I think we'll see a few deals announced September 15th. That's always an exciting period for fans over here, many times they are looking forward to the next year even though the new year has yet to start. Funny world we live in now where we seem to care more about celebrities and what they're doing away from their respective projects than the art they actually produce.

It's the same with our sport: what Ryan Villopoto is going to do in 2015, what's going on with James Stewart and his provisional FIM suspension and who's riding where seem to be more important than the results on the track. Anyway, with that out of the way let's tackle a few different topics here.

There are three big races still left for the fans of American motocross. One is the Monster Energy Cup in Las Vegas in the middle of October, another is the brand-new Red Bull Straight Rhythm race in Southern California (where there's just one lane of obstacles and the racers drag race down it) and the big daddy of them all, the Motocross des Nations (I'm NOT calling it "of Nations"- I just can't do it). Of course

Team USA is going to be once again the big draw of the race and they'll be looking to try and win the Chamberlain Trophy after two years of defeat. The 2012 race in Lommel, Belgium- there really wasn't much of a chance to win that one. The European racers are too good in the sand and on a track where many of them have spun thousands of laps on, the American's chances were never that good. But last year in Germany, that was one that truly got away. The American racers were the best in any of their three classes [Ed: Er, and Tony Cairoli?] and that was a big problem. The track was great, not really favoring anyone but the USA riders just didn't get it done. Not great starts and shockingly, not a lot of speed either. Eli Tomac was great but Ryan Dungey and Justin Barcia had days they would rather forget. And saying that, Team USA still finished as runner-up. Not that bad for any country other than the red, white and blue.

This year the Americans are sending Dungey again, Tomac again and Jeremy Martin, the new 250MX champion. On a track that looks a little jumpy, a little sandy I'd once again put the Americans as favorites but the days of being able to just drop the gate and watch USA win are long over. If they crash, if they can't get good starts- they won't win. It's that simple. I can't wait to watch it again and I also can't wait to see if my country Canada can get into, at least, the A-main and put in some good rides.



Yoshiumra Suzuki's James Stewart is one of the most popular riders that the sport has ever seen. He's a multi-time champion and for my money, the most talented person to ever - yes, ever - ride a motorcycle. I know he doesn't have the titles and wins others do but from someone that has seen just about every single professional race he's ever been in, he's something special.

And that's why it's very strange to see him not contest the last four nationals as press release after press release mentioned that he was "recovering" but no one seems to know from what exactly. He pulled out of the second moto at Millville with dizziness but there was never any official explanation if something was indeed bothering him. What made it even more perplexing was his presence at local Southern California tracks practicing each week but then he and his team not showing up for the races.

And apparently this was OK with his team as people I talked to there were just in a holding pattern each week waiting for James to make a decision as to whether he was racing or not that weekend. And Stewart's brother Malcolm was diagnosed with severe dehydration after Budds Creek but his team was also told, after a couple weeks of recovery time, that his return was imminent but he never came back either. Of course the conspiracy people out there were thinking that both Stewart's had decided to boycott the national series as some sort of mini-revolt over James positive test for amphetamines from the

Seattle supercross but that didn't make much sense as it wasn't the outdoor promoters who tested him and put that info out there. Other people theorized that he was still hurt and it was none of anyone's business what was bothering him but then why not put it out there concerning what is actually wrong?

As usual with James, it's complicated and I feel sorry for his fans as they are left in the dark as to why their favorite rider isn't at the races but yet there are photos of him riding each week. The whole thing with James and Malcolm is a bit strange from my end and I hope we get resolution to this positive test sample pronto and we get to see both brothers out on the track as soon as the Red Bull Straight Rhythm contest or the Monster Energy Cup (where James is the defending champion). But I, and many others, seem to not really be able to guess what's up.

POLISHING THE SILVER

ROLAND BROWN HAS BEEN AT THE UNVEILING AND LAUNCH OF PRACTICALLY EVERY SIGNIFICANT MOTORCYCLE TO HIT THE MARKET FOR OVER TWO DECADES SO WE ASKED HIM WHICH CARRIED THE MOST IMPACT IN THAT TIME. OVER TO THE TUNING FORKS...

By Roland Brown, Photos by Patrick Curtet

RB'S MOST IMPACTFUL MOTORCYCLE



The big European motorcycle shows are coming round again with Intermot in Cologne in a few weeks time followed by EICMA in Milan a month later. One hot rumour is that Yamaha is about to continue its remarkable comeback by finally unveiling an all-new version of the YZF-R1 — a true Rossi/Lorenzo replica; a YZR-M1 factory MotoGP bike inspired rocketship with well over 200bhp and an ultra-light and high-tech chassis.

A new-generation R1 is undoubtedly in the pipeline and might well appear this year. If it does then it's likely to be spectacular. But whatever Yamaha comes up with, it's unlikely to approach the impact that the original YZF-R1 made when it was unleashed on an unsuspecting world in October 1997.

No bike of recent years has made jaws drop like that first R1 did on its arrival 17 years ago. Back then we knew Yamaha had something special on the way, but there were none of the leaked photos or internet rumours that would precede such an important introduction today.

Like the other journalists who assembled in a hangar-like building on the outskirts of Milan on the eve of the big show that October, I had no idea what the new bike was called or looked like.

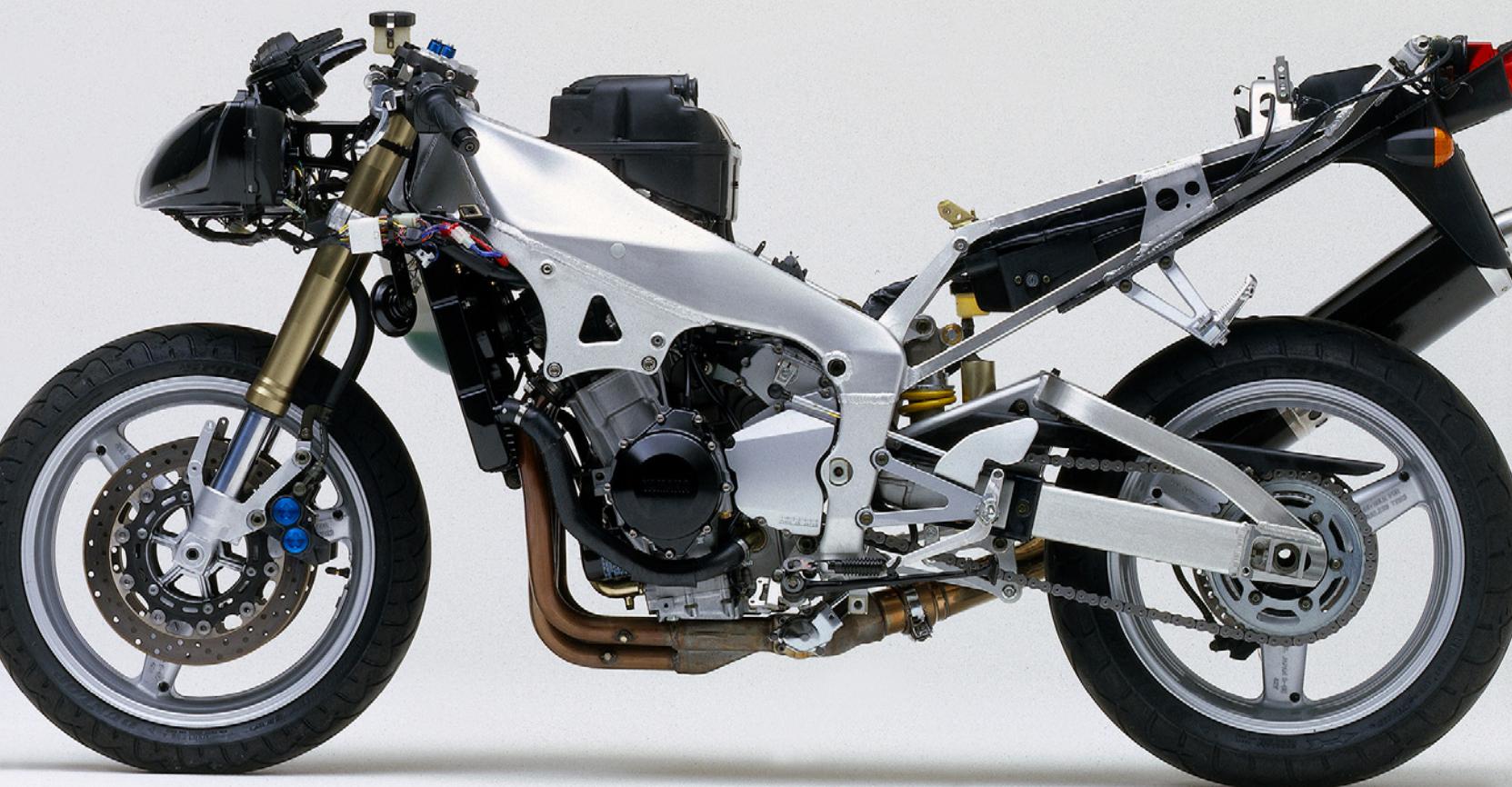
Most of these show unveilings are boring, but not this one. As Barbra Streisand's *The Way We Were* boomed out to set the scene, a big screen showed video clips of Yamaha racing history, from Phil Read, Agostini and Jarno Saarinen to Johnny Cecotto, Boet van Dulmen, Kenny Roberts and Eddie Lawson.



Then, with the atmosphere already cranked up to fever pitch, a stunning red-and-white bike appeared through the dry ice, being ridden onto the stage by Yamaha's World Superbike star Scott Russell, who was sparkling in a glittering, silver one-piece suit that looked as though it was made of kitchen foil. Meanwhile the screen listed the bike's three vital statistics: maximum power 150bhp, dry weight 177kg, wheelbase 1395mm.

Just those figures made it clear that the YZF-R1 was in a different league — in power, weight and compact size — to everything else on the road. And the following month's riding launch confirmed it. After a day at Cartagena circuit and another ripping up the surrounding roads of southern Spain, there was no doubt that the R1 had moved the superbike game on just as dramatically as Honda's suddenly outclassed Fireblade had done on its own debut six years earlier.

RB'S MOST IMPACTFUL MOTORCYCLE



D TEST



RB'S MOST IMPACTFUL MOTORCYCLE



My own launch almost ended early when I momentarily forgot which side of the road I should be on, and rode round several blind bends before realising. My only excuse was that the R1 was so fast and exciting that it emptied your brain of all other thought. Even at a standstill the sleek and racy Yamaha got the juices flowing. Its 998cc, 20-valve motor was so powerful that it put 160mph on the digital speedo in treble-quick time.

That ultra-light 177kg dry weight figure combined with racy geometry, the innovative stacked gearbox and resultant long swing-arm (for once Yamaha's PR hype was justified) to give middleweight style agility with heaps of traction, too. The R1 could be a handlebar-flapping handful on bumpy roads, but a generation of wide-eyed owners soon discovered that there was nothing on two wheels to approach it for pure speed or excitement.

Yamaha did a good job of keeping the R1 competitive, too. Two years later it was tweaked to lose a few kilograms; for 2004 it was updated with a ram-air intake system that helped increase peak output to 180bhp. Arguably the biggest change came in 2009, with the launch of the all-new model with its revolutionary crossplane crankshaft. That bike restored much of the R1's glamour and took Ben Spies to Yamaha's first World Superbike championship.

By that point the R1 was well established as a major commercial success but more recent years have been tough. A combination of setbacks — notably the plummeting worldwide demand for sports bikes, the rise of European challengers led by BMW's S1000RR, and Yamaha's well documented struggles through the global economic downturn — resulted in minimal development, and the R1 falling well off the pace.

10 TEST



RB'S MOST IMPACTFUL MOTORCYCLE



All that looks set to change with the 2015 model, at least if there's truth in the rumours that have been growing since July, when a prototype four-cylinder Yamaha was photographed being tested at Eastern Creek in Australia. There's talk of two separate versions, one for mass consumption and an exotic, highly tuned Limited Edition model — designed with an eye on World Superbike's coming EVO regulations, which allow only limited engine tuning — that could produce as much as 230bhp.

However impressive the final specification, the internet's all-seeing eye means that Yamaha will surely be unable to generate the level of surprise and awe that greeted the unveiling of that first R1 back in 1997. But the firm does know how to put on a show, and its old racing history video can be updated with plenty more wins and titles. If Valentino can be persuaded to ride it onto a show stage wearing a suit made of silver foil, Yamaha's recovery really will be complete.





HSL/APICO

Apico have the throttle pinned on the HSL Holeshot device in the UK and the popular distributors will be 'exclusive' for this handy piece of kit that is already assisting a number of MXGP teams with their starts. HSL claim their technology is easy to install and their promo manual offers simple, two line instructions for application to YZ, KX-F, RM-Z, CRF and SX-F motorcycles. It works by clapping the rear shock momentarily and apparently keeping chain tension maintained. Stability is increased thanks to a lower centre of gravity without affecting the performance of the shock. The Holeshot device is made of high grade alloy with an anodised finish and involves no alteration to suspension set-up. The latest generation is adjustable in eight positions and over 30mm of height and comes in four colours.

As mentioned Apico have the drop on this one for British riders and racers and more information can be found at: www.apico.co.uk/apico-hsl-rear-holeshot/







BACKPAGE

Monster Energy Girls
by Marian Chytka







ON TRACK OFF ROAD



'On-track Off-road' is a free, bi-weekly publication for the screen focused on bringing the latest perspectives on events, blogs and some of the very finest photography from the three worlds of the FIM Motocross World Championship, the AMA Motocross and Supercross series' and MotoGP.

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